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 ACTION ARA-16

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 ICA-11 DODE-00
 H-01 NSC-05 NSAE-00 HA-06 PM-09 PA-01 DCT-02
 SP-02 SPRS-02 /081 W

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P 031258Z APR 81
 FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9072

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade toDate ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 2391

E.O. 12065: RDS4 4/2/11 (FRIEDMAN, T.B.) OR-P
 TAGS: SHUM, AR
 SUBJECT: (U) REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: WE HAVE LEARNED OF AN APPARENT DISAPPEARANCE
 AND HAVE RAISED THE MATTER WITH APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.
 HARASSMENT OF ONE LEADING HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER HAS BEGUN
 AGAIN. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) WE HAVE BEEN RELIABLY INFORMED OF A REPORTED DISAPP-
 EARANCE. THE INCIDENT REPORTEDLY BEGAN EARLY MARCH 27 WHEN THREE
 MEN, WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS POLICE OFFICERS, ARRESTED ANGEL
 ROMANO, A THIRTY-YEAR-OLD WORKER AT HIS HOME IN THE WORKING
 CLASS, BUENOS AIRES SUBURB OF QUILMES. THE MEN REPORTEDLY
 TOLD ROMANO'S WIFE, WHO WITNESSED THE PROCEDURE, THAT THEY
 WERE TAKING HIM TO THE QUILMES POLICE STATION. SUBSEQUENTLY,
 THE POLICE STATION DENIED TO THE WIFE THAT ROMANO WAS DETAINED
 THERE. SHE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE HIME ANYWHERE ELSE.
 A HABEAS CORPUS WAS FILED IN BEHALF OF ROMANO APRIL 1
 IN THE LA PLATA COURT (WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR QUILMES AREA).

[REDACTED] COMMENT: THE PROCEDURE USED BY THE ARRESTING
 AUTHORITIES IS CURIOUS IN THAT IT APPARENTLY INVOLVED
 RELATIVELY FEW MEN. MAJOR SECURITY OPERATIONS USUALLY
 ARE CARRIED OUT BY MUCH LARGER FORCE. THE SMALL SIZE

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OF THE OPERATION AS WELL AS INFORMATION THAT ROMANO MAY
 HAVE BEEN A LABOR ACTIVIST IN HIS LAST PLACE OF EMPLOY-

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MENT HAVE LED LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITISTS TO SPECULATE PRIVATELY THAT THIS DISAPPEARANCE MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO SOME LOCAL LABOR PROBLEM. THEY DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS DISAPPEARANCE WAS PART OF SOME WIDER CRACKDOWN, A VIEW THAT WE SHARE. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE ALSO SHARE THEIR VIEW THE LONGER ROMANO REMAINS MISSING THE LESS ARE THE CHANCES THAT HE WILL TURN UP ALIVE.

4. [REDACTED] EMBOFF LATE APRIL 1 CALLED ON NEW DIRECTOR OF NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS AT FONMIN, FRANCISCO MARIO MOLINA SALAS, TO RELAY WHAT WE HAD BEEN TOLD OF THE ROMANO CASE. MOLINA SAID HE APPRECIATED BEING ADVISED OF THE MATTER, WHICH HE SAID, "COULD BE SOMETHING OR NOTHING," AND SAID FONMIN WOULD CHECK WITH THE LA PLATA JUDGE AND MININT. HE SPECULATED ABOUT COINCIDENCE IN TIMING OF THIS REPORTED ABDUCTION AND COMMENCEMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON PROPOSED REPEAL OF HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT, SAYING IF ROMANO HAS IN FACT BEEN DISAPPEARED IT COULD BE THE WORK OF EITHER THE EXTREME RIGHT OR LEFT. HE EXPLAINED THERE ARE ULTRA-NATIONALISTS IN INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS WHO SHARE WITH FAR LEFT SAME GOAL: DISRUPTION OF US-ARGENTINE RAPPROCHEMENT. HE INDICATED HIS BELIEF THAT THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF WHOEVER WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ARRESTS OF THE CELS LEADERS AND THE PLAZA DEL MAYO MOTHERS ON THE EVE OF VILLA'S VISIT TO THE US LAST MONTH.

5. [REDACTED] EMBOFF WAS CALLED MORNING OF APRIL 2 BY LOWER-RANKING FONMIN OFFICER WHO SAID GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF INTERNAL SECURITY OF MININT HAS BEEN APPRISED OF OUR [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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REPORT ON ROMANO AND IS NOW MAKING APPROPRIATE INQUIRIES. HE ADDED EMBASSY WOULD BE INFORMED OF WHATEVER MIGHT RESULT. MEANTIME, EMBASSY, APRIL 2, WAS IN CONTACT WITH ESTABLISHED CHANNEL TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE TO PASS ON WHAT WE HAD BEEN TOLD ABOUT ROMANO.

5. [REDACTED] WE WERE INFORMED TODAY THAT EMILO MIGNONE, A LEADING HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, IS AGAIN BEING SUBJECTED TO LOW-LEVEL HARASSMENT. IN ADDITION TO THREATENING LETTERS MAILED TO HIM IN RECENT WEEKS, WE BELIEVES THAT SURVEILLANCE OF HIS APARTMENT BEGAN AGAIN APRIL 1. ALSO, ABOUT TEN DAYS AGO WHILE HIS CAR WAS PARKED IN

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A PARKING LOT UNKNOWN PERSONS CUT HIS BRAKE LINES AND PUT SAND IN HIS MOTOR. MIGNONE ATTRIBUTES THIS ACTION TO SOME OFFICIAL SERVICE, NOTING THAT IT WOULD BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYBODY ELSE TO CARRY OUT SUCH VANDALISM IN A PARKING LOT WHICH WAS BEING WATCHED BY ATTENDANTS.

7. [REDACTED] MIGNONE AND THE OTHER DEFENDENTS IN THE CELS CASE ARE UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE COURSE OF THE JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION AGAINST THEM THAT FOLLOWED THEIR ARREST LAST MONTH. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, ON THE ORDERS OF FEDERAL JUDGE GILLET -- AZOATEGUI AT THIS MOMENT IS OUT OF THE CASE -- ALMOST ALL OF THEIR PAPERS HAVE BEEN RETURNED TO THEM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE OUTCOME OF THE JUDICIAL PROCEDURES IS STILL UNCERTAIN. THOUGH THE RETURN OF THE PAPERS IS A POSITIVE SIGN THERE IS STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MAY BE FORMALLY CHARGED UNDER EITHER THE NATIONAL SECURITY LAW OR FOR VIOLATION OF ARTICLE 224 OF THE PENAL CODE, (UNAUTHORIZED POSSESSION OF MAPS AND OTHER INFORMATION REGARDING THE SECURITY FORCES).
SHLAUDEMAN

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NVVZCZ

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